



A MAP TO THE SUN BY SLOANE LEONG

Graphic novel - Fiction

Ages 16+ (contains drug usage, sexual assault, pedophilia, etc.)

Heart-wrenching, yet insightful

In *A Map to the Sun*, Sloane Leong illustrates a vibrant representation of a diverse set of young women on a high school basketball team who tackle different issues depicting domestic problems, sexism, pedophilia, bullying, and body image.

Renata is an athletic high school student who spends her spare time dribbling basketballs and shooting endless hoops over the summer. Her world is put at an abrupt halt when she meets Luna, a fellow girl her age that she befriends as the summer days carry on. However, her relationship with Renata strictly pauses after she moves back to Hawaii because of parental issues, leaving Renata feeling stranded in solitude without Luna.

As the school year following Renata's lonely summer unfolds, she's mesmerized to find out that Luna has moved back from Oahu to attend her high school as a brand new student, riddling her with waves of anxiousness. After excruciating months of Luna not returning her calls, she suddenly pops into the picture as a new student at her school. Luna approaches her with intense confidence, doing her best to rekindle the bond that they once shared. Although Renata accepts her friendship request, she still can't let go of the loneliness that unfurled after she hadn't responded to her throughout the summer.

Her current friends befriend Luna alongside Renata. From then on, a new young women's high school basketball team forms, and the members start to come trickling in, including Luna and Renata.

Renata serves as the team's captain, which means that she has a crucial responsibility to uphold. But how can she maintain being the captain while she works on her family-related issues back and forth? What about her teammates, who undergo different forms of adversity regarding sexism, body issues, sexual assault, and general bullying? Will the outcome of Renata and Luna's relationship be a whirlwind of success, or has it long been doomed ever since that summer?

I believe that this graphic novel may prove to be relatable to several young women, especially towards those who've stood sexism broadly in the face in any public setting. I find the artwork within each panel to be phenomenally illustrated. From the shading to the contrasting colors to the beautifully drawn lines and sketches, everything is stunning. In short, I liked this story because it highlights the accuracy of how dreadful some of the characters' experiences are and why their modern-day issues can provoke awareness, especially to those who haven't experienced the brutality of sexism in women's sports. I recommend this to those who strive to have a more in-depth understanding of current issues such as these, as the instances that the characters undergo are highly diverse, complex, and of unimaginable cruelty. These instances truly exemplify why nobody on this earth is the same and how all of us have our battles to fight, whether they're clearly known or astonishingly invisible to others.

